

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
April 27, 2005 @ 4:30 p.m. Council Chambers

PRESENT

Gil Palmer
Ian Kohen
Jay Myers
Chrystal Pushor
Jason Staley
Barbara Stevens
Dick Underdahl-Peirce
Wes Roy

ABSENT

Cindy Felsten
Marie Schroeder
Madhu Vedak

Chairperson Palmer called the meeting to order.

STAFF PRESENT:

Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith, Secretary Lula Young.
Visitors present: Rob Aspy.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Roll was called and minutes were reviewed by Commissioner Myers. Commissioner Underdahl-Peirce moved to accept the minutes of the regular full commission meeting of March 30, 2005. Commissioner Myers seconded. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley reported on behalf of Commissioner Felsten a balance of \$6,317.86. The balance includes \$2,357.00 in annual dinner ticket sales and donations minus a catering deposit of \$1,790.75 paid to Lemley's Catering.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Tinsley informed Commissioners of the written update 'Talking Points' memo she submitted to the Mayor that provided context, clarity and understanding of the Commission's action taken during the March 2005 meeting on the issue of the proposed legislation calling for a state constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage. Director Tinsley stated that it was important that commissioners know what was communicated in the memo.

Director Tinsley reported that the office has been busy with case filings and mediations. She reported that the office has already filed its seventh case and that the tenth (10th) case is being closed. A complaint based on National Origin/Race involving racial harassment in public accommodation was filed.

Director Tinsley informed commissioners of the Diversity in Columbus training she facilitated on April 21, 2005, for Quinco's Leadership Academy. Director Tinsley will be conducting future trainings including two full day sessions at the Center for Teaching and Learning scheduled for June 1st and August 2nd, 2005. Each session will cover student peer harassment for BCSC teachers and school personnel who have contact with students. Registration begins April 25th and teachers will be eligible for graduate credit.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

COMMUNITY CONCERNS/UPDATES:

The Commission recognized visitor, Rob Aspy, newly elected president of the Mayor's Cultural Awareness Committee. Mr. Aspy is the Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist for Indiana University in Bloomington, IN.

Mr. Aspy informed commissioners of a training opportunity to be facilitated by Tatiana Organizational Development and funded by the Heritage Fund. Mr. Aspy stated that Tatiana has conducted similar seminars at IU Bloomington. The topic of the seminar is "Managing Multicultural Workers." Issues that will be covered include, 'an examination of what is culture, concept of self, ambiguity issues, etc. The seminar will be a four-hour session to be scheduled between September and October of 2005 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and provided at no cost. They are looking at scheduling the seminar possibly before Ethnic Expo. Commissioner's confirmed their interest in attending the offered training.

ANNUAL DINNER:

Commissioners volunteered to host contest winners and complete various assignments during the annual dinner.

Commissioners and staff who volunteered to serve as table hosts included: Commissioner Palmer and Director Tinsley, Speaker's table; Commissioner Pushor, High School Essay; Deputy Director Smith, High School Art; Commissioner Myers, Middle School Essay; Commissioner Vedak, Middle School Honorable Mention; Commissioner Staley and Commissioner Kohen, Elementary Essay Winners; Personnel Director, Chuck Boll will be asked to host the Elementary Art Winner.

Commissioners Stevens, Palmer, Myers and Kohen volunteered to assist with seating. All commissioners volunteered to assist with cleanup.

MAYOR'S CULTURAL AWARENESS COMMITTEE:

Commissioner Roy, whose report was provided during the open discussion forum with Committee President Rob Aspy, informed the Commissioners of the committee's future meetings.

GAY/STRAIGHT ALLIANCE REPORT:

Commissioner Kohen reported that members of the G/SA were pleased with the level of support demonstrated by commissioners during the March 2005 meeting.

Commissioner Kohen reported that his speaking engagement with Northside Middle School eighth graders went well. Students asked several questions about the Human Rights Commission.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH PRESENTATION – POETRY:

Deputy Director Smith provided the Commissioners with an introduction to the history of Black Poetry and Education. Deputy Director Smith shared insight on the establishment of Wilberforce University, Wilberforce Ohio that was founded, primarily, to educate the children of slaves.

Deputy Director Smith's presentation provided literary references such as the Norton Anthology of African American Literature, co-authored by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. The Souls of Black Folks, by W. E. B. DuBois. She provided insight into the significance of African American poetry and the experiences of African-Americans in this country. In her presentation, Deputy Director Smith gave an overview of the correlation between various historical events in Black history and the literature, particularly poetry written by African Americans in that same era, such as during slavery and the Harlem Renaissance. Commissioners enjoyed excerpts of poems by Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Naomi Madgett and Maya Angelou. Through her presentation, Deputy Director Smith demonstrated how African American poetry helped fill in the missing history pages of the African American and others.

ADJOURN:

Commissioner Staley moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Myers seconded. Meeting adjourned.

[Approved with amendment 05/25/2005, 'Director Tinsley submitted on behalf of Commissioner Felsten'.]